

Range Extensions of Mollusk Species Found on the Tropical Coast of El Salvador

BY

MARCO ANTONIO HERNÁNDEZ

Curador de la Sección de Malacología y de Invertebrados Marinos del Museo de Historia Natural de El Salvador

THE COASTS OF EL SALVADOR form part of the tropical Pacific coastline of Central America, making it part of the Panamic Province. This province extends from Cabo San Lucas (Gulf of California, approximately 30°30'N) to Cabo Blanco, north of Perú (4°15'S).

It is possible that the coasts of this region are some of the most representative of the malacological fauna in the American Pacific. STUARDO (1964) estimated the diversity of this area to be 2 200 species, including the gastropods, pelecypods, scaphopods and polyplacophorans. KEEN (1971), studying the same tropical zone, found that the diversity of mollusks is much higher and reports approximately 3 317 species.

Early in 1977, the Museo de Historia Natural de El Salvador started in a systematic manner a study aimed at an inventory of the malacological fauna of the country. To date, this work has identified close to 250 species, 26 of which are not previously reported in El Salvador (Tables 1 and 2).

Generally, the species of mollusks that inhabit the coasts of El Salvador live in environments that are relatively uniform, with gradual climatological fluctuations. STUARDO (1964) suggests that among the environmental factors having the greatest influence on these invertebrates is temperature. OLSSON (1961) reports the surface temperature of the waters of the Panamic Province as varying between 26.6° and 29.4°C, with the exception of temporary cold water upwellings.

The coasts of El Salvador are characterized by their volcanic origin; some parts demonstrate the geological history of the area (GIERLOFF-EMDEN, 1971).

The sandy beaches present a topography in which strong waves remove great masses of sand, and set up surface currents; for example, Costa del Sol, El Pimiental and Los Blancos.

Of the rocky beaches, most representative are Los Cóbános and Maculís.

Table 1

Extensions of range northward to the coast of El Salvador

Species	New northern record
	Gastropoda
<i>Tegula pellisserpentis</i> (Wood)	Los Cóbános, Sonsonate
<i>Turbo saxosus</i> (Wood)	El Tamarindo, estuary
<i>Astraea buschii</i> (Philippi)	El Tamarindo, estuary
<i>Littorina varia</i> Sowerby	Barra de Santiago and El Tamarindo
<i>Cerithidea pulchra</i> (C. B. Adams)	El Tamarindo, estuary
<i>Anachis rugosa</i> (Sowerby)	Solimar; also El Tamarindo
<i>Microcithara cithara</i> (Reeve)	Los Cóbános, Sonsonate
<i>Cancellaria bulbulus</i> Sowerby	Costa del Sol; also, El Tamarindo
<i>Conus patricius</i> (Hinds)	Costa del Sol; also, El Tamarindo
	Pelecypoda
<i>Anadara similis</i> (C. B. Adams)	Los Cóbános; also, El Tamarindo
<i>Chama buddiana</i> C. B. Adams	Maculís, La Unión
<i>Protothaca beili</i> (Olsson)	El Tamarindo, estuary
<i>Tellina ecuadoriana</i> Pilsbry & Olsson	El Tamarindo, estuary
<i>Strigilla disjuncta</i> (Carpenter)	El Tamarindo, estuary
<i>Donax dentifer</i> Hanley	Barra de Santiago; also, El Tamarindo
<i>Corbula tumaca</i> (Olsson)	El Tamarindo, estuary
<i>Periploma pentadactylus</i> Pilsbry & Olsson	Costa del Sol; La Paz

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Gastropoda

Cyclothyca corrugata Stearns Playa El Zonte, La Libertad

Table 2

Extensions of range southward to the coast of El Salvador

Species	New southern record
	Gastropoda
<i>Astraea olivacea</i> (Wood)	Los Cóbano; Costa del Sol; El Tamarindo
<i>Cerithium maculosum</i> (Kiener)	Los Cóbano, Sonsonate
<i>Planaxis obsoletus</i> Menke	Los Cóbano and Maculís, La Unión
<i>Acanthina tyrianthina</i> Berry	Los Cóbano, Sonsonate
<i>Solenosteira gatesi</i> Berry	Barra de Santiago and El Tamarindo
<i>Northia northiae</i> (Griffith & Pidgeon)	Costa del Sol and El Tamarindo
<i>Fusinus ambustus</i> (Gould)	Julupita, La Libertad, estuary
	Pelecypoda
<i>Cardita affinis</i> Sowerby	El Tamarindo and Maculís, La Unión
<i>Amphichaena kindermanni</i> Philippi	Metalío and El Tamarindo

Los Cóbano is characterized by having the formation of a true reef. The beach is strewn with large quantities of organic material (shell fragments mixed with sand).

In the Golfo de Fonseca (El Tamarindo, Playitas and Maculís) relatively tranquil waters provide favorable conditions for an abundant invertebrate fauna and some marine mammals.

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Pelecypoda

Plicatula anomioides Keen El Pital, La Libertad